

Even with a proper count, intentional shooting deaths of children—including gang shootings and murder-suicides by family members—far exceed accidental gun deaths. But accidents, more than the other firearm-related deaths, come with endless hypotheticals about what could have been done differently.

The rifle association's lobbying arm recently posted on its Web site a claim that adult criminals who mishandle firearms—as opposed to law-abiding gun owners—are responsible for most fatal accidents involving children. But *The Times's* review found that a vast majority of cases revolved around children's access to firearms, with the shooting either self-inflicted or done by another child.

A common theme in the cases examined by *The Times*, in fact, was the almost magnetic attraction of firearms among boys. In all but a handful of instances, the shooter was male. Boys also accounted for more than 80 percent of the victims.

Time and again, boys could not resist handling a gun, disregarding repeated warnings by adults and, sometimes, their own sense that they were doing something wrong.

When Joshua Skorczewski, 11, took an unloaded 20-gauge shotgun out of the family gun cabinet in western Minnesota on July 28, 2008, it was because he was excited about going to a gun safety class that night and wanted to practice.

But for reasons that he later struggled to explain to the police, Joshua loaded a single shell into the gun and pulled the hammer back. He decided he should put the gun back, but his finger slipped. It fired, killing his 12-year-old sister, Natasha, who was standing in the kitchen with him. When his mother called from work to check on them, a shaken Joshua told her he had just called 911: "Mom, I shot Tasha."

Christina Wenzel, the mother of Alex Whitfield, had tried to make sure he did not visit anyone's house if guns were present. What she did not know, when Alex went to his father's apartment last April, was that a family member had stored three loaded guns there.

"I always thought I had Alex protected from being killed by another child by a gun that was not secured," Ms. Wenzel said. "Unfortunately, I was mistaken."

#### UNDERCOUNTING DEATHS

Compiling a complete census of accidental gun deaths of children is difficult, because most states do not consider death certificate data a matter of public record. In a handful of states, however, the information is publicly available. Using these death records as a guide, along with hundreds of medical examiner and coroner reports and police investigative files, *The Times* sought to identify every accidental firearm death of a child age 14 and under in Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina and Ohio dating to 1999, and in California to 2007. Records were also obtained from several county medical examiners' offices in Florida, Illinois and Texas.

The goal, in the end, was an in-depth portrait of accidental firearm deaths of children, one that would shed light on how such killings occur and might be prevented. In all, *The Times* cataloged 259 gun accidents that killed children ages 14 and younger. The youngest was just 9 months old, shot in his crib.

In four of the five states—California, Georgia, North Carolina and Ohio—*The Times* identified roughly twice as many accidental killings as were tallied in the corresponding federal data. In the fifth, Minnesota, there were 50 percent more accidental gun deaths. (*The Times* excluded some fatal shootings, like pellet gun accidents, that are normally included in the federal statistics.)

The undercount stems from the peculiarities by which medical examiners and coroners make their "manner of death" rulings. These pronouncements, along with other information entered on death certificates, are the basis for the nation's mortality statistics, which are assembled by the National Center for Health Statistics, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Choosing among five options—homicide, accidental, suicide, natural or undetermined—most medical examiners and coroners simply call any death in which one person shoots another a homicide.

#### GUN STATISTICS

##### NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED BY GUNS IN THE 12 MONTHS AFTER NEWTOWN

31,537 people die from gun violence annually:

11,583 people are murdered.

18,783 people kill themselves.

584 people are killed accidentally.

334 are killed by police intervention.

252 die but intent is not known.

##### NUMBER OF PERSONS INJURED BY GUN VIOLENCE

71,386 people survive gun injuries:

51,249 people are injured in an attack.

3,627 people survive a suicide attempt.

15,815 people are shot accidentally.

694 people are shot by police intervention.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for many minorities in this country.

82.8 percent of young people who are killed are killed with a firearm;

Every 30 minutes, a child or teenager in America is injured by a gun;

Every 3 hours and 15 minutes, a child or a teenager loses their life to a firearm.

#### APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF UNITED STATES-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission for a term expiring on December 31, 2015:

Mr. Daniel M. Slane, Ohio

#### APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER OF COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, effective December 16, 2013, pursuant to section 2 of the Civil Rights Commission Amendments Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 1975 note), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the Commission on Civil Rights for a term expiring December 15, 2019:

Mr. Peter N. Kirsanow, Cleveland, Ohio

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DOYLE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today until 3:30 p.m. on account of death in family.

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and December 13 on account of attending to family acute medical care and hospitalization.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 2871. An act to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2922. An act to extend the authority of the Supreme Court Police to protect court officials away from the Supreme Court grounds.

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1471. An act to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of the Army to reconsider decisions to inter or honor the memory of a person in a national cemetery, and for other purposes.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 434, the House adjourned until Monday, December 16, 2013, at 11 a.m., as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Nelson Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa.

#### OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

"I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

has been subscribed to in person and filed in duplicate with the Clerk of the House of Representatives by the following Member of the 113th Congress,